

Storm Update

By Scott Peters

This past weekend, I toured areas damaged by recent storms with community leaders and city officials. The record-breaking rains have devastated many homes in La Jolla over the last month, and my heart went out to the families affected. I was particularly concerned to find that one couple had contacted the City to say that flooding was occurring in their home, only to get the answer that a crew would be there on Monday. Fortunately, I was able to contact the City Manager and get crews on site right away. Although the rains had crews busy around the City, no resident should receive this type of response to an emergency call. I am committed to making sure that the City responds to these families and that we do everything possible to help them rebuild their homes and their lives.

Below I have listed some information about what is happening to date. If you have had storm damage affect your property, please contact Betsy Brennan or Woo-Jin Shim in my office at 619-236-6611 so that we can relay the information to the appropriate City officials. If you need other help, we may be able to help find people in the community with the skills and resources available to help. Neighbors have filled sandbags, provided shelter, housed pets, and provided comfort to those in need, and I thank them for their kindness. If you would like to assist local families who have been affected by the storms, please contact my office. While the extent of damage was small compared to the Cedar Fires, we learned important lessons from the fires. The mudslides have displaced a number of people, and it will be important for La Jolla to pull together for the victims.

On February 24, 2005, Mayor Murphy and the City Council declared a Local State of Emergency, which has been submitted to the State of California, Office of Emergency Services. This is the first step the City is required to take in order for San Diego to be considered for local and/or individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The City is waiting for the Governor to act and proclaim San Diego a disaster area. The declaration will then go to the President for a federal declaration, which will allow FEMA to bring aid to San Diego. Should this occur, FEMA will decide whether San Diego will receive local and/or individual assistance.

The State Office of Emergency Services and FEMA toured damaged areas in San Diego last week. They were able to identify approximately 21 homes that would definitely qualify for FEMA individual assistance. Augie Ghio, the City of San Diego's Director of Homeland Security, and City Staff are working to gather information from people who have suffered damage to try to assist them in receiving individual assistance from FEMA. The information is being transmitted to the Governor's Office. We highly recommend that all home and business owners document any damage from the recent storm period in case FEMA approves individual assistance.

I have also asked that the City waive all building and permit fees for storm damaged properties, and provide expedited processing, so people can begin rebuilding as soon as possible.

Please contact me if you are in need of assistance or would like to provide assistance to any of our local families. I look forward to working with you as your councilman and neighbor to help get past this difficult time.

Some important numbers:

To file a claim against the City call the City of San Diego Risk Management Department at: (619) 236-7300 or you can access their website at <http://www.sandiego.gov/riskmanagement/>

To report non-emergency storm related damage contact the City Development Services Department: (858) 492-5070

To report sink holes or clogged storm drains call: (619) 527-7500

To encourage the Governor to declare a state of emergency contact his San Diego office at (619)525-4641

And please remember that you can always contact my office for assistance at (619)236-6611.